

CITY OF MUSKEGON  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES

March 4, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairperson, D. Chambers.

MEMBERS PRESENT: D. Chambers, J. Hilt, L. Spataro, A. Medema, T. Bosma, T. Russo

MEMBERS ABSENT: L. Cole, excused.

STAFF PRESENT: B. Moore, B. Lazor, H. Griffith

OTHERS PRESENT: A. Bleakley, 318 Houston; J. Vantol, Advanced Signs; R. Cowdery, Sign City.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 4, 2003 was made by J. Hilt, supported by T. Russo and unanimously approved.

**WALK-ON**

A motion to accept Case 2003-11 as a walk-on, was made by T. Russo, supported by A. Medema and was unanimously approved.

**NEW BUSINESS/PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**Case 2003-06: Applicant: Ann Bleakley, 318 Houston, District: Houston, Class: A. Request to install wheelchair access to basement.** B. Lazor presented the staff report. Applicant wishes to remove existing "Bilco" cellar doors and add a wheelchair accessible entrance to the basement of the Hovey House. Currently there are steps leading up from the parking lot in the rear of the building as seen in the picture. The applicant wishes to remove these steps and dig a trench down to the basement in order to have unobstructed wheelchair access. The walls of the trench will be made of poured concrete. A new door will be added to the basement entrance as indicated in the supplied brochure page. This door type was approved at a previous HDC meeting for the East entrance to the building. A new light fixture that matches ones currently on the house and metal railing will also be installed as seen in supplied drawings. The applicant states that the railing will keep with the character of this house. The location of this construction is in the rear of the building away from both Houston and Fourth streets. The applicant is continually improving this historic resource. The basement of the Hovey house is being renovated to contain more offices. The basement needs to be wheelchair accessible. The construction is located in an area that is not readily visible from Fourth and Houston. The changes will allow this building to become more usable and updated without affecting the character or integrity of the structure. The digging of the wheelchair ramp will have minimal visual impact, the new light is consistent with ones already on the building and the applicant states the railing will keep with the architectural character of the building, therefore staff recommends approval.

A. Bleakley stated that they will be ready to pour the concrete by the end of this week and this should be completed by May.

L. Spataro arrived at 4:04 p.m.

A motion that the construction of the wheelchair ramp, installation of the new light and protective railing be approved per submitted details with the following condition: The new railing shall keep with the architectural character of the building, was made by T. Bosma, supported by J. Hilt and approved with L. Spataro abstaining.

**Case 2003-07: Applicant: Community Foundation of Muskegon County (Roy Cowdery), 425 W. Western, District: Downtown Structure, Class: A. Request to install sign.** B. Lazor presented the staff report. Applicant wishes to install an 18" X 24" plaque at the entrance to the Community Foundation in the Frauenthal Center. The plaque will be made out of cast bronze. Black will be the background color and gold will be the coloring of the letters and outline. The plaque will be located 12" down from an existing light fixture on the left side of the entrance door as indicated in supplied drawings. The applicant's request to install a plaque on this building conforms to guidelines set by the HDC. The plaque will enhance the visibility of the Community Foundation, while not deterring from the historic look of the building. The colors, materials, and size of the sign meet HDC guidelines, therefore staff recommends approval. Applicant must secure necessary building permits.

R. Cowdery provided a sample of the material to be used for the plaque for the commission members.

A motion that the installation of the 18" X 24" plaque at the entrance to the Community Foundation be approved per submitted details, was made by L. Spataro, supported by A. Medema and unanimously approved.

**Case 2003-08: Applicant: Hackley Hospital (Jim Vantol), 1670 Peck Street, District: Clinton-Peck, Class: A. Request to install sign.** B. Lazor presented the staff report. Applicant wishes to replace an 18" X 72" sign on the front of this house. Currently there is a sign in this location. The color of the new sign will match that of the old one and the other Hackley signs in the area. The sign will be made of metal and will not have visible fasteners. The new sign to be placed on this house is the same size and color as the one to be removed. The only difference is the wording and the addition of a Hackley logo. The sign will not adversely affect the neighborhood; therefore staff recommends approval per submitted details. Applicant must secure necessary building permits.

L. Spataro asked if the sign would be illuminated. J. Vantol stated that it would not.

A motion that the installation of the 18" X 72" sign be approved per submitted details, was made by T. Russo, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved.

**Case 2003-09: Applicant: Hackley Hospital (Jim Vantol), 1715 Peck Street, District: Clinton-Peck, Class: A. Request to install sign.** B. Lazor presented the staff report. Applicant wishes to install a 24" X 36" Sign on the front wall of this house. The color of the sign will be brown and blue, which matches other Hackley Hospital signs in the area. The sign also includes the name of the doctors working in the building. The sign will be made of metal and will not have visible fasteners. FYI: The sign has already been installed. The new sign conforms to the guidelines set forth by the HDC. The sign will not adversely affect the neighborhood; therefore

staff recommends approval per submitted details. Applicant must secure necessary building permits.

A motion that the installation of the 24" X 36" sign be approved per submitted details, was made by L. Spataro, supported by T. Bosma and unanimously approved.

### **WALK-ON**

**Case 2003-11: Applicant: John Allen; 341 Bauer.** L. Spataro asked about the time frame for the house move. J. Allen stated that the home would be dismantled sometime in May. The components would be moved. The brickwork should be completed by late fall. The brickwork would take about 4 months. B. Moore stated that the property for the infill program has been split into 4 lots. The purchase agreements have timelines. The purchase agreements should be going before the City Commission at the second meeting in March.

A motion that the home at 341 Bauer be moved to a lot on W. Muskegon Ave. be approved, was made by J. Hilt, supported by L. Spataro and unanimously approved.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**502 West Webster** – B. Moore presented the staff report. A copy of the Planning Commission staff report and minutes were provided to the commission members. There had seemed to be a couple of issues that the Planning Commission found. The first is the parking situation. The second is the difference between a resident and an owner. A representative of the Heritage Association spoke at the Planning Commission meeting. He stated that there were concerns with the number of Bed & Breakfasts already in the area. They have gone beyond the definition of a Bed & Breakfast by having large cookouts and other things. L. Spataro added that there were concerns as to whether or not this should be a Bed & Breakfast. The City would have more control if the home were to remain as a single-family home. This way, if there are nuisances that the neighboring homes are complaining about, the City could take action. D. Chambers stated that if this were a weekend gathering of friends, then it would be like a single-family dwelling with friends. B. Moore stated that the applicant has a business (LLC). They market to others, not just friends, and there is a fee. The reason behind this being for weekends is that the applicant works during the week. A. Medema stated that in regards to parking, 2 vehicles might fit in the driveway and 1 vehicle in the garage. She is concerned about where the rest of the people would park. There is already a lot of on street parking for the Hackley/Hume homes and when Summer Celebration is going on, there isn't adequate parking for a Bed & Breakfast. B. Moore stated that the applicant would need to show the Planning Commission where the parking would be. T. Bosma stated that without a proposed site layout, he doesn't feel there is enough information for them to make an informed recommendation to the Planning Commission. L. Spataro agreed with T. Bosma. The owner would have the option of removing the fence so they could park on the terrace. In order for them to remove the fence, it would have to go before the HDC for approval. They may even be interested in purchasing the lot next to them for parking if it isn't a buildable lot. B. Moore asked for clarification as to the commission members' concerns. She believed the commission members were concerned with the character of the grounds and the parking. D. Chambers agreed and stated that the parking is a crucial issue. A. Medema stated that as long as the owner is following all the zoning rules in regards to pouring concrete for a parking pad, this

might be done behind the garage. This area is already overgrown. T. Russo had some concerns with the alley, which is utilized, being so close to this portion of the yard behind the garage. T. Bosma stated that he didn't believe this sounded like a Bed & Breakfast to him.

A motion for L. Spataro to send a communication to the Planning Commission stating that some concerns of the HDC commission members are that this may be to high of an intensity use for this location, a precedent would be set, and the commission members would reserve any formal action until presented with more information, was made by L. Spataro, supported by A. Medema and unanimously approved.

B. Moore added that an excerpt of these minutes would be included in the Planning Commissioners' packets.

**1129 Peck Street & 1096 Third Street--- update** – The commission members were provided with copies of letters regarding the progress of each of the addresses. The address of 1129 Peck is behind schedule. The interior repairs were to be completed by January 31, 2003. According to the inspection report and photographs, this has not been completed. The address of 1096 Third St. has not obtained any of the permits needed. The electrical and plumbing permits haven't been obtained yet and the permits and work would need to be done by April 1, 2003. If this isn't done, then the City will obtain a bid for the demolition of the property at 1096 Third St. and have it demolished.

L. Spataro stated that there appears to be a buyer for 1129 Peck St. so chances are, the work will be completed. L. Spataro stated that 1096 Third St. is likely to be demolished. T. Russo stated that this is a nice home and it was too bad that the home couldn't be moved to another location and rehabilitated. L. Spataro stated that the home has suffered termite damage. Moving the home could be difficult.

**HDC Newsletter** – B. Lazor asked what the commission members would like to see in the newsletter. L. Spataro stated that there should be a brief overview of what the HDC does. There could also be a section on the lot purchase program with pictures showing a home being moved and a list of the incentives.

**HDC 2003 Goals --- Revisited** – B. Lazor stated that the Annual Report could be removed from the list. The Newsletter is in progress. He had to find another printer for the Design Book, but otherwise this will be completed. L. Spataro added that the Ordinance Amendments could also be removed. A. Medema asked about the street signage. B. Lazor stated that it would be something like an addition to the top of a street sign. L. Spataro added that it would brand the Historic Districts so people will know when they are entering an Historic District. He stated that the commission members should look at some mock-ups from the traffic department and compare them with their needs and price. Then this could go to City Commission.

**Workshop for new members** - B. Lazor handed the commission members an invitation to attend a workshop for volunteers serving on Boards/Committees/Commissions for a training workshop. Dates and times were provided on the invitations.

**Mall Redevelopment** – D. Chambers stated that he had been invited by Chris McGuigan for a meeting regarding the mall development. He asked L. Spataro to attend with him. L. Spataro accepted the invitation. D. Chambers stated that he would like to be able to tour the Century Club and the Bank to see what kind of condition they are in. L. Spataro stated that they were up to code at the time of the mall closing.

The meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

hmg  
3/4/03

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*“We admire that which is old not because it is old, but because it is beautiful.”*  
Winston Churchill